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DEPT FOR AF/SPG, A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON
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SUBJECT: RIZEIGAT ARAB CONCERNED ABOUT ETHNIC POLARIZATION IN
DARFUR

REF: KHARTOUM 992

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On July 21 poloffs met with Waleed Madibbo Mousa, a prominent Darfur Rizeigat Arab intellectual and civil society leader who recently organized the equestrian festival in Ed-Daien, South Darfur (Reftel). Madibbo expressed grave concern over the deepening ethnic divide in Darfur, which is now evolving in the direction of pitting the Zaghawa against all other tribes. He was also fearful of a rumored impending JEM military offensive (he passed on familiar rumors of hundreds of JEM vehicles departing Ndjamena destined for Darfur) and predicted that such an action would destabilize the weakened NCP regime, create a power vacuum JEM cannot fill, and plunge Darfur into chaos. Madibbo views existing "institutional frameworks" and UN attempts at mediation as wholly inadequate and futile in addressing these challenges. As an alternative, he proposed convening a forum of "rational, genuine" tribal leaders from to promote intertribal unity and organic solutions to the Darfur crisis. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Madibbo asserted that the Zaghawa are now allying for political and military domination of Darfur, and declared that Darfuri society is increasingly being split between Zaghawa and non-Zaghawa. "In Darfur we don't have rebel movements, just Zaghawa," he stated. He asserted that as a result, the Rizeigat Arabs are now in "full harmony" with the Masalit, the Fur, and other smaller tribes who feel alienated by the impending threat. Abdul Wahid, for example, is "now just a politician" and has formed alliances with the Rizeigat for self-preservation. Furthermore, Madibbo asserted that the Zaghawa primacy is being exacerbated by the ethnicized politics of GOS, which is seeking to keep Darfur divided: he claimed that GOS is now arming Darfuri African tribes such as the Birgit to fight the Zaghawa (SLA/U), though he admitted he could provide scant detail on this assertion.

¶3. (SBU) Citing Arab contacts in Chad, Madibbo claimed that JEM's military force has quadrupled, and is poised to undertake a major offensive in Darfur, Iordofan, or Khartoum State. He predicted that if JEM attacks Khartoum they will not win, but the regime will crumble nonetheless because is has lost the "moral imperative" to govern as a result of ICC indictment against President Bashir. Madibbo was clearly troubled by this prospect, which he predicted will occur within several months.

¶4. (SBU) Madibbo expressed frusration with existing attempt to resolve the arfur criis, decrying the ineffectiveness of signed agreements such as the DPA as well a the futilityof effort by the UN, whic he charaterized as consisting of alof and ineffectual bureaucrats. "People ae dyng," he said, "and they're worried about their per diem." He was similarly dismissive of the appointment of Djibril Bassole as the new U.N. and African Union joint chief mediator for Darfur. (Note: Due to his own interest in promoting civil society tracks to resolving the conflict in Darfur, Madibbo has always been dismissive of peace talks qith the rebels. End note.)

15. (SBU) Madibbo, himself a civil society leader, argued for the need to empower and promote genuine civil society leaders over militarized groups, and proposed convening a forum of Rizeigat, Fur, Masalit, Zaghawa and other tribal representatives to promote intertribal unity. He urged that the US sponsor such a conference, --yto demonstrate that "America is not against the Arabs in Darfur." He also viewed the proposed conference a signal of solidarity in Darfur that would help distance Arab tribes from the NCP. We need to send a message to the Arabs that "they don't have go down with Bashir," he said. (Note: Madibbo expressed support for the upcoming conference on Darfur organized by Abdelbagi Jibril, director of the Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre. The conference, which will be attended by intellectuals and civil society leaders in Arusha, Tanzania, is an independent initiative organized without cooperation from JMST or UN. End note.)

15. (SBU) Looking beyond the crisis in Darfur, Madibbo stated that the best hope for peace was a split from the ethnic, religious and ideological polarization of the past and the fostering of a secular, liberal democracy. He asserted that "middle of the spectrum" political views, embodied by traditional political parties such as Umma and DUP as well as Sufi leaders, are in fact representative of the majority of the Sudanese citizenry. Yet this moderate voice remains largely inactive, he said, in contrast with the more robust activity of more radical groups. To remedy this, Madibbo postulated the need for "constitutional re-engineering" tha4 would remove religious figures from the political process. Along these lines, Madibbo also noted that despite his party base, Sadiq al Mahdi is no longer an asset to democracy in Sudan, as he maintains illusions of an Islamic State

16. (SBU) Comment: Madibbo's dire assessment of the threat posed by
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JEM is more alarmist than most, but his report of a military buildup is consistent with rumors that Post has been hearing from other sources - rumors that remain unconfirmed. Madibbo has his own agenda when it comes to organizing civil society conferences, which is to ensure that he gains in profile as a non-military leader, one who is capable of bringing together various ethnic factions in Darfur. In principle the idea is a good one, and post has encouraged Madibbo to develop a proposal and distribute it to potential partners. Madibbo's information about the Darfur civil society meeting in Tanzania is more detailed than previous reports we have received. The JMST reported to us July 23 that the SPLM has requested assistance in organizing another round of Darfur rebel unification talks in Juba. Post will pass on additional details of these efforts following meetings with SPLM officials in the coming days.

FERNANDEZ